

High Risk Field Trips and Activities

Background

Certain field trips and activities with a higher than usual degree of risk can provide valuable educational activities that may be used to enhance student learning and development. However, school staff must commit to providing a safe learning environment at all times for school activities. Such high risk activities and field trips require careful consideration and assessment of risk factors and are not for every grade or student.

Definitions

High Risk Field Trips - A high risk field trip is defined as a school activity that occurs outside the traditional school setting and includes activities that have a higher potential for injury accidents, and therefore represent areas of concern.

High Risk Activities - A high risk activity is defined as a school activity that occurs within the traditional school setting and includes activities that have a higher potential for injury accidents, and therefore represent areas of concern.

PROCEDURES

1. Each high risk field trip or activity shall receive prior approval of the principal.
2. The Superintendent of Schools, or designate, shall be informed of high-risk field trips and activities prior to commitments being made to students and parents. A copy of all information to be provided to parents shall be provided by the school.
3. Prior to each high risk field trip or activity, written parental permission shall be obtained for participating students, using the school division form, [Consent of Parent or Guardian to Participate in an Outside Program or Activity](#), and ["Acknowledgement of Risk."](#) In order to ensure informed consent, parents shall be provided with the following information, in writing:
 - a. Purpose or educational goal of the field trip or activity;
 - b. Proposed itinerary;
 - c. Description of the activities or events proposed;
 - d. An indication of extraordinary or unusual hazards that may be encountered on the field trip;
 - e. Completed Risk Assessments to ensure safety precautions are in place to deal with activities involving risk;
 - f. Emergency Plan to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances;
 - g. Need for additional medical coverage for out-of-province trips;
 - h. Method of transportation to be used;
 - i. Arrangements for supervision;
 - j. Cost to the student.
4. Each high risk field trip and activity shall have a teacher designated as the teacher-leader in charge.

5. Principals shall ensure adequate preparation and supervision for all high risk field trips and activities. A principal may authorize persons other than teachers to provide supervision or instruction when warranted by the nature of the specific high risk field trip. For the duration of all high risk field trips and activities the teacher-leader must be in attendance.
 - a. The teacher-leader must always have overall responsibility for the field trip or activity to ensure conformance of the field trip or activity with this administrative procedure. The teacher-leader must ensure that supervision is available at all times and that assistant supervisors are prepared to deal with any emergencies that may arise. The supervisory arrangements will depend upon:
 - the age, maturity, needs and ability levels of the students;
 - the inherent risk of the activity;
 - the circumstances of the particular activity.
 - b. For high-risk activities, competent instruction and supervision in these activities are mandatory. Competence may be established by virtue of a certificate from a governing body for activities such as skiing, swimming, and canoeing. In areas where certificates are not issued, competency may be recognized by virtue of experience and demonstrated expertise in the activity.
 - c. The teacher-leader is responsible for being familiar with, and conducting a safety assessment of, the proposed site of the field trip or activity.
 - d. The teacher-leader shall ensure that training, preparation, orientation and expectations of all student participants and supervisors are provided.
 - e. Supervision shall include an individual suitably trained in first aid.
 - f. An appropriately equipped portable first aid kit must be accessible.
 - g. High Risk field trips or activities involving students of both genders shall have supervisors of both genders.
 - h. Contingency plans must be in place in the event of cancellation, adverse weather and road conditions, or other conditions that may require a change to the original itinerary.
 - i. The Superintendent, may, at any time, cancel or alter a high risk field trip or activity. If the cancellation or alteration is due to forces, conditions or threats outside the control of the school division, no request for compensation by a parent will be entertained.
 - j. The teacher-leader shall be responsible for ensuring that the following items are present and readily available on field trips and activities:
 - list of student participants;
 - phone contact numbers;
 - Alberta Health Care numbers;
 - information regarding medication and medic-alert needs of participants

- 6 When necessary, principals are expected to seek advice and assistance from experts in planning field trips and activities and in assessing risk. Following are recommended personnel and publications:
- Personnel:
 - District Insurance Contact: Associate Superintendent, Business Affairs
 - Programs: Associate Superintendent, Learning Services
 - Personnel: Associate Superintendent, Administrative Services
 - Publications:
 - Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools
 - Guidelines for Compliance with the Revised Alberta First Aid Regulation
 - Youth Safe Outdoors
 - Safety Oriented Guidelines for Outdoor Education Leadership and Programming
 - The Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation

HIGH RISK FIELD TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES RECORDS

- 1 The schools shall keep a record for two years of each high risk field trip and activity, which will include:
 - Principal authorization; Superintendent authorization where required.
 - parent consent
 - all information provided to parents
 - list of participating students
 - list of supervisors
- 2 In the event of injury, the record of the incident shall be retained in school files for a minimum of 20 years. A copy shall also be forwarded to Central Office immediately following the incident, where it will be retained for the same period of time.

January, 2005

Updates: August, 2013, February 2020

References:

Section 1,11,31,32,52,53,196,197,222 Education Act

Forms:

[Consent of Parent or Guardian to Participate in an Outside Program or Activity](#)

[Acknowledgement of Risk](#)